

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawing includes changes to Fig. 1. This sheet, which includes Fig. 1 only, replaces the originally filed sheet.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

The Office Action of March 25, 2011 has been carefully considered.. Claim 1 has been amended. Claim 1 is in this application.

Claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 second paragraph. Claim 1 has been amended to recite the that the weight percentage is based on the total water added. Support for this amendment is found throughout the specification and in particular on page 9, line 1 through page 10, line 18. Fig. 1 has been amended to more clearly recite the invention defined by the present claims. No new matter has been entered.

The previously presented claim 1 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,834,049 to Kageyama, in combination U.S. Patent No. 4,892,747 to Ohta and JP 0516972A to Itakura et al.. Applicants respectfully submit that the teachings of these references do not disclose or suggest the invention defined by the present claims.

Kageyama discloses a food sterilizing apparatus for periodically applying a steam flush for 5-10 seconds to trays including a small quantity of rice. The steam flush is repeated 6-10 times. After the sterilization, trays are covered with an ultraviolet-lid to provide an airtight condition of the tray.

In contrast to the invention defined by the present claims, Kageyama does not teach or suggest a process for preparing rice gruel. As described on page 2 of the present application, the process for preparing rice gruel is much different than the process for producing rice. In addition, Kageyama does not teach or suggest the steps of: adding 30-70 wt% of total cooking water into the bowl in an aseptic space; cooking the rice; adding the residual amount of the total cooking water into the bowl; sealing and wrapping the bowl; and leaving aside the sealed bowl for 12 minutes without applying additional cooking and then cooling the bowl in a 10°C water bath for 15 minutes. As shown in Example 2 and described on page 13, line 14-16 of the present application, it has been found that the amount of cooking water used before/after the cooking process can be used as the control point of the mass production of rice gruel. There is no teaching or suggestion of these features in Kageyama.

Furthermore, Ohta does not teach or suggest the steps: of adding 30-70 wt% of total cooking water into the bowl in an aseptic space; cooking the rice; adding the residual amount of

the total cooking water into the bowl; sealing and wrapping the bowl; and leaving aside the sealed bowl for 12 minutes without applying additional cooking and then cooling the bowl in a 10°C water bath for 15 minutes. Rather, Ohta, discloses a first cooking step in 4 L. of water and a second cooking step by adding 5 L. of boiling water to the rice, heating for an additional 20 minutes and then filtering off the remaining water. In contrast, the present claimed method recites a first addition of cooking water, cooking, and a second addition of the cooking water (30-70% of the total cooking water is added in the first step the residual amount of the total cooking water is then added). The bowl is sealed. The sealed bowl is left aside without applying additional cooking means before cooling. Ohta, in contrast, teaches heating after the cooking water is added. Accordingly, Ohta does not teach or suggest the invention defined by the present claims.

Itakura et al. disclose a method of manufacturing rice gruel, comprising steps of washing rice, filling a bowl with the rice and water, deaerating, sealing, applying pressure and heat (115~130° C), cooling to 60~95° C and cooling in water having the temperature below 25° C.

In contrast to the invention defined by the present claims Itakura et al. do not teach or suggest a process for preparing rice gruel comprising the steps of : adding 30-70 wt% of total cooking water into the bowl in an aseptic space; cooking the rice; adding the residual amount of the total cooking water into the bowl; sealing and wrapping the bowl; and leaving aside the sealed bowl for 12 minutes without applying additional cooking and then cooling the bowl in a 10°C water bath for 15 minutes. There is no teaching or suggestion in Itakura et al. of adding cooking water and Itakura et al. do not cure the deficiencies of Kageyama and Ohta noted above.

Applicants submit that the present invention does not require a heating operation after a second addition of water while Kageyama, Ohta and Itajura et al. require a heating operation after every addition of water. By using the steam contained in a sealed bowl without an additional heating operation according to the present invention, the manufacturing process of the present invention can be simplified and its manufacturing costs can be reduced while spreadability and texture of the rice, viscosity, color and gloss of the rice gruel can be optimized. Accordingly, the invention defined by the present claims is not obvious in view of Kageyama in combination with Ohta and Itakura et al.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that all pending claims are in condition for allowance and request that all claims be allowed. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned should he believe that this would expedite prosecution of this application. It is believed that no fee is required. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-2165.

Respectfully submitted,



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Diane Dunn McKay, Esq.
Reg. No. 34,586
Attorney for Applicant

PORZIO, BROMBERG & NEWMAN, P.C.
29 Thanet Road, Suite 201
Princeton, NJ 08540
Tel: 609 924 8555
Fax: 609 924 3036